

Assemblymember Christine Kehoe



*Brings You News
From Sacramento*

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Assemblymember Christine Kehoe, Speaker Pro Tem

Poison Control Centers in Danger of Closing

The Poison Control System (CPCS) centers may lose their funding and cease operations after June 2003. I recently visited the San Diego Division of the CPCS at the UCSD Medical Center to draw attention to the lack of funding for poison control services because of the state's general fund crisis.

Poison exposure is the third leading cause of childhood injury in America. California's Poison Control Centers manage more than 300,000 calls per year – More than 50% involving children 5 years old and younger. The centers provide save lives while reducing the demand on trauma centers and emergency rooms.

To help address this funding problem, I introduced AB 372 to continue the operations of the four poison control centers in California. My bill asks health insurance industry to bear some of the cost. The majority of cases managed by the CPCS are for Californians who are covered by HMOs, PPOs, or other health care insurers. These insurance companies save tens of millions of dollars per year because of services provided by poison control centers, however taxpayers have had to pay the entire cost of funding the centers. The bill would require that these insurers now share poison control center costs. To keep this program alive, it would cost approximately .35 cents per insured Californian per year.

To read the text of this bill, go to www.leginfo.ca.gov and search by bill number or author.

One Courageous Woman

Last Monday, I honored Alemi Daba as "Woman of the Year" of the 76th Assembly District, in a ceremony at the State Capitol. The special commemoration was organized to recognize exemplary California women from each Assembly District in the state.

Alemi is an inspirational leader in San Diego. She has overcome incredible circumstances to get where she is, and I'm pleased to pay tribute to such an amazing woman. After being tortured and imprisoned under Ethiopian communist government, Alemi Daba and her two daughters escaped and arrived in San Diego in 1988 as refugees. She lost the rest of her family in the continuing violence there.

Once in San Diego, Alemi quickly learned the language and emerged as a leader of what is now a refugee community of 10,000. She currently serves as Director of Women and Children for the Alliance for African Assistance, helping refugees from around the world resettle in San Diego, ease their transition to American life and help them overcome the hardships they escaped.

The floor ceremony for Woman of the Year was the centerpiece of a daylong celebration at the State Capitol.

To view photos from the ceremony, go to my website at <http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a76/> and click on **Photo Gallery**.

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National Boys' & Girls' Clubs – here for our kids

This year, we will celebrate April 6 through April 12 as “National Boys and Girls Club Week.”

In every community, there are boys and girls who, unfortunately, are left to find their own recreation and companionship on the street. An increasing number of children are alone at home with no adult care or supervision. These young people need to know that someone cares about them. Boys and Girls Clubs offer that and much more. Club programs and services promote and enhance the development of boys and girls by instilling in them a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging, and influence.

The club's mission is to inspire and enable all young people, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible, and caring citizens.

Boys and Girls Clubs provide:

- A safe place to learn
- Ongoing relationships with caring adult professionals
- Life-enhancing programs and character developing opportunities
- Hope and opportunity

If you want to help a child, or get involved with a Boys and Girls Club in your community, go to their website at <http://www.bgca.org/>, or call 1-800-854-CLUB.

The New Motor Vehicle Board

A new agency has been created to assist you the consumer if you're having a dispute with a vehicle manufacturer or distributor. The New Motor Vehicle Board is a program within the DMV designed to regulate and settle disputes in the vehicle industry. Within the Board there is a legal department which operates in a quasi-judicial capacity to resolve disputes between franchised dealers and manufacturers/distributors of new motor vehicles (including motorcycles). Additionally, there is a Consumer Mediation Services Program which attempts to resolve disputes between consumers and new motor vehicle dealers and/or a manufacturers or distributors.

The new Motor Vehicle Board can be reached for public assistance at 916-445-1888 or on the web at www.nmvb.ca.gov.

Kehoe Library

My office offers a variety of free brochures on various subjects. Get information on everything from state parks, college grants and loans, protecting your privacy, senior resources and more. Email me at Assemblymember.Kehoe@assembly.ca.gov to get a complete listing of our brochures and have some sent to you.

Some of the brochures available are:

- California State Parks in San Diego County
- California Boating Guide
- Know the Facts About Cervical Cancer
- How to Lobby the California State Legislature
- Consumer Reports' Guide to California Medicare HMOs
- Visit the California State Assembly on the Internet
- Toll-Free Telephone Numbers
- California Housing Finance Agency

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